IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-3, 6-14, 17, 18 and 20-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-3, 8, 11, 12, 17, and 22 have been amended herein. A complete listing of pending claims is provided below.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for testing a fecal sample, the method comprising:

obtaining a fecal sample from a person; and

determining whether there is an elevated level of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies ~~are present~~ in the sample, wherein an elevated level of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies is an indicator of ulcerative colitis.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein if the sample contains an elevated level of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies, a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis is ~~may be substantially~~ concluded.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the elevated level ~~presence~~ of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies is used to aid in the differentiation of ulcerative colitis from Crohn's disease.

4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2, wherein the elevated level~~presence~~ of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies is used to aid in the differentiation of ulcerative colitis from other gastrointestinal illnesses.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 4, wherein the other gastrointestinal illness is irritable bowel syndrome.

6. (Previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies comprise total anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies.

7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

diluting the fecal sample.

8. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 7, further comprising:

contacting the fecal sample with neutrophil cytoplasmic antigens to create a treated sample.

9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 8, further comprising:

contacting the treated sample with polyvalent antibodies to human immunoglobulin to create a readable sample.

10. (Previously presented) The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising:

determining an optical density of the readable sample at 450 nm, wherein the optical density corresponds to a level of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies in the sample.

11. (Currently amended) A diagnostic assay for diagnosing ulcerative colitis by determining the anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies, the assay comprising:

obtaining a human fecal sample;

diluting the fecal sample;

contacting the diluted sample with neutrophil cytoplasmic antigens to create a treated sample;

contacting the treated sample with polyvalent antibodies to human immunoglobulin to create a readable sample;

determining the optical density of the readable sample at 450 nm.

12. (Currently amended) The diagnostic assay as recited in claim 11, wherein if the readable sample contains anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies, a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis is ~~substantially~~ concluded.

13. (Previously presented) The diagnostic assay as recited in claim 12, wherein the anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies are one of IgG, IgE, IgM, IgD, IgA_{sec}, IgA, and combinations thereof.

14. (Previously presented) The diagnostic assay as recited in claim 1, wherein the assay is selected from a group consisting of an enzyme-linked immunoassay and a lateral flow membrane test.

15. (Previously Canceled)

16. (Previously Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) A method for screening for ulcerative colitis, the method comprising:

obtaining a fecal sample from a person;

determining whether anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies are present in the sample; and

if so, a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis ~~may be substantially~~is concluded.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the presence of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies is used to aid in the differentiation of ulcerative colitis from Crohn's disease.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein the presence of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies is used to aid in the differentiation of ulcerative colitis from other gastrointestinal illnesses.

20. (Previously presented) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies comprise total anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies.

21. (Original) The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising:

diluting the sample.

22. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 21, further comprising:

contacting the diluted sample with neutrophil cytoplasmic antigens to create a treated sample.

23. (Original) The method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

contacting the treated sample with polyvalent antibodies to human immunoglobulin to create a readable sample.

24. (Previously presented) The method as recited in claim 23, further comprising: determining an optical density of the readable sample at 450 nm, wherein the optical density corresponds to a level of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies in the sample.

25. (Canceled)